

CHAPTER 8

IMPLEMENTATION

The Comprehensive Plan serves many purposes. It is an analysis of the current state of the Town and a "vision" of where the Town desires to be in the future. The plan is an internal policy document guiding local decision-making effort. A strategy is identified and discussed to identify means of achieving the goals. The Plan serves as a statement of intent for neighboring governments, developers, and similarly interested parties so that they may be aware of the Town of Mount Airy's concerns. It will also help to coordinate the Town's plan with the comprehensive plans of surrounding jurisdictions.

One of the fundamental challenges of the Plan is the constant reminder that all issues are interrelated. Land-use planning, environmental stewardship, infrastructure provisions, and adequate public facilities provisions are all affected by each other. When making decisions on any one issue, the indirect impact on other concerns must be weighed.

Many of the Plan recommendations will impact new development. This does not necessarily mean more regulation, but intends to better regulate by ensuring that the Code and Ordinances achieve their intent, that different criteria do not conflict with each other. It should be a goal to streamline the regulations so they address only what is necessary to achieve the desired result.

Each chapter of the Plan has specific policy recommendations that can be undertaken to achieve the stated goal. The following text outlines an order for implementation of the primary policies and actions.

1. Zoning Amendments

The primary priority after the Comprehensive Plan adoption is the revision of the current Town Zoning ordinance to reflect any changes recommended by the plan. A new comprehensive map must also be updated to reflect any zoning changes that are made during the Comprehensive Plan process. Ideally, the Comprehensive Plan Map should match the existing or updated zoning map, which then should accurately reflect existing land use.

The Comprehensive Map is a guideline for future development and should be adhered to as closely as possible. Zoning ordinances implement the principles of the Comprehensive Plan and should be updated on occasion to continue to reflect the policies advocated by the comprehensive plan. Regular evaluations of the Town Zoning Codes are necessary to ensure the Comprehensive Plan is being followed. A comprehensive evaluation of the Town Zoning Ordinance is scheduled to take place after the Comprehensive Plan for the Town is completed.

2. Natural Resource Policies

Once the revised Zoning Ordinance and Map are adopted, attention should be focused on review of natural resource protection policies. Some of the primary concerns are water-resource issues including well exploration, protection, and stormwater management practices. Conflicting policies with regard to well exploration and development within the Town Code should be revised.

Problems with the effectiveness, maintenance and design of stormwater management facilities affect every development and will have lasting implications for the Town. Improved steep slope regulations can achieve water resource goals as well and should be part of this second step of policy review.

3. Subdivision Regulations

Many of the regulations within the Subdivision Ordinance should be reviewed for compatibility with land-use and zoning goals and natural resource policies. In addition, the chapter on Community Design Guidelines recommends that a more detailed review be given to site plan analysis. This attention should also emphasize the character and aesthetics of new development as well as infrastructure provisions.

4. Public Facility and Infrastructure Policies

Town policies that affect the provision of infrastructure and facilities required by development should be evaluated. It is vital that new development does not decrease the level of services for the existing community, or create a demand the Town is unable to meet. "Sustainable development", a phrase often used to describe global environmental responsibility, is also appropriately applied to the responsibility that should be borne by development.

Infrastructure or facilities that the Town manages, including water, sewer, trash, recycling, street and parks maintenance and similar services can be comprehensively managed by the Town. The Town should cooperate with county or state efforts to maintain levels of service for schools, county and state roads, libraries and other facilities in part or wholly provided by the county or state.

The Town can improve its management of services and facilities by better tracking techniques. "Master Plans" for the water and sewer systems, road maintenance and construction, parks and recreation improvements and stormwater management can be drawn to anticipate development at the applicable zoning category and density. Impact fees or dedications that are applicable can also be anticipated; helping to evaluate whether required exactions would meet the intended goals for the Town.

System wide regular evaluations of the public facilities will also assist in avoiding any serious "shortfall" situations that may place the Town residents in jeopardy.

5. Inter-Jurisdictional Cooperation

The second chapter of the Master Plan outlines some of the complex issues the Town must address given its location at the corner of four counties and pursue discussion of how each county's planning policies affect the Town and the Mt. Airy region.

Of particular importance are Frederick and Carroll Counties support in building a better Mount Airy. This has been achieved and continues to be achieved by permitting the Town to control development within its limits, limit development outside the Town and by locating services where they properly belong within the established community boundaries. It will take several years to address most of the issues raised in this Plan.

The next plan effort, which is required within six years after the adoption of this plan, should review the success or problems encountered in adherence to the policies presented herein. Inevitably, some recommendations will have been successful and others may have been too difficult to implement. The underlying concern of all recommendations is the betterment of the community for all residents, present and future. Following the overall "vision" of what the Town wants to be in the future is essential. Adherence to this conviction, through the implementation of this plan and subsequent revisions, will lead the Town toward a better future.